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TEACHER-TRAINING DEPARTMENTS IN NORTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOLS

LEONARD V. KOOS
University of Washington

It is known to most of those who are in any way concerned with secondary education that a number of high schools in North Central and other states are maintaining, as a part of their educational offering, teacher-training or normal departments. To what extent teachers of these departments are required to teach other high-school work, of what the work in these departments is constituted, to what extent credit toward graduation from the high school is granted for it, what the principles are that determine its organization and content, what other high-school work is required of training-department students, and for what teaching these departments aim to prepare—these facts are not so well known. The following pages present such facts concerning the teacher-training departments in 19 high schools in 7 states of the Middle West: Kansas, 6; Minnesota, 1; Missouri, 5; Nebraska, 3; Oklahoma, 3; South Dakota, 1; Wisconsin, 1. The data used in the study were supplied by teachers who were designated by their principals as “constructively interested in the development of effective courses of study” in their line of work. The high schools from which the data have come are in communities ranging in population from two or three thousand to more than a hundred thousand.

THE WORK OF THE TRAINING-DEPARTMENT TEACHER

What the importance of the department is in the minds of those responsible for the high schools may be judged in part by the amount of work other than that of the teacher-training department taught by the instructor of this work. The facts as to this may be seen in the following tabulation showing the average number of classes per day other than teacher-training classes taught by these teachers:

Average Number of Classes Other than Training Classes	Number of Teachers
0.....	7
1.....	1
1.5.....	1
2.....	7
3.....	2
4.....	1
<hr/> Average, 1.4	<hr/> Total, 19

The fact that 7 of the total number of training-department instructors devote their time exclusively to the department, that 16 teach 2 classes or less and that in but 3 schools are they required to teach 3 or more periods per day outside the department, indicates that the department is made their primary concern, i.e., it is important in the minds of those responsible for the high schools.

The subjects other than training-department courses taught by these teachers were ascertained and are as follows: history is mentioned 6 times; English, mathematics, and science are each named twice; domestic science is mentioned once. Two teachers speak of additional administrative duties.

THE TRAINING-DEPARTMENT OFFERING

Years of appearance of the teacher-training work.—The work of the departments appears in the third and fourth high-school years in 17 schools and exclusively in the fourth year in 2 schools. In the former the work does not constitute all of the work of the student in either year. In the latter it requires the student's full time.

The usual teaching subjects.—The educational offering in these departments is exceedingly diverse. The subjects as reported have, for the purposes of this study, been distributed in three groups which we may term (a) the usual teaching subjects, (b) the pedagogical subjects, and (c) the special subjects. Subjects in the first group are required in all but one of the 19 departments. The representation of these subjects may be seen in the following tabulation which lists each subject under the name by which it was reported and the number of times it appears in the data supplied:

Subject	Number of Times Reported	Subject	Number of Times Reported
Reviews.....	11	American history and civics.	1
Arithmetic.....	6	Language and grammar.....	1
Civics.....	6	Geography.....	1
Physiology.....	6	Reading, literature, composi-	
Common branches.....	3	tion, spelling, and penman-	
English (professional).....	2	ship.....	1
American history.....	2		

The total amount of time devoted to these subjects ranges from a third of a year to a year, but, for most schools offering them, reviews extend through a year, and arithmetic, civics, and physiology extend through a half-year.

The pedagogical subjects.—One or more pedagogical subjects are required by all the 19 schools. The representation of these subjects may be seen in the following tabulation. Subjects are designated by the names given them by the teachers reporting. As in the case of the usual teaching subjects, the amount of time devoted to these subjects ranges from one-third to a full school year, but psychology and methods and management are more commonly half-year subjects, methods and methods and observation extend through a full year, while the practice in pedagogy is almost evenly divided between half-year and full-year courses.

Subject	Number of Times Reported	Subject	Number of Times Reported
Psychology.....	10	Professional work.....	1
Pedagogy.....	7	Psychology and school man-	
Methods and management..	6	agement.....	1
Methods.....	5	Pedagogy, psychology, coun-	
Methods and observation....	3	try-school management, and	
History of education.....	2	country life.....	1
School management.....	1		

Special subjects.—The offering in the special subjects is notably infrequent. Agriculture, when organized and conducted especially for the students in these departments, is reported for 8 schools, in 5 cases as a half-year, in 2 as a full-year course, and in the remaining departments as part of a one-third year course in agriculture and nature-study. But it is also required, as may be seen below, when

not so organized and conducted, in 8 additional schools. It is thus seen to be a constituent of the work in almost all teacher-training departments, which, in the light of the fact to be pointed out later, that these departments are largely occupied with the preparation of rural-school teachers, is surely to be commended. Other courses in special subjects appearing once each and organized and conducted especially for this department are manual training and domestic science, drawing, drawing and music, and bookkeeping. Additional instances of the requirement of special subjects, where these are not maintained especially for the students in these departments, will be found listed below under "Other High-School Work Required of the Training-Department Students."

THE PRINCIPLES DETERMINING THE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE COURSES IN THE USUAL TEACHING SUBJECTS

The teachers in these departments were asked to state the principle that determines the organization and content of the courses in such usual teaching subjects, the common branches, as are constituents of the work of the department. Is the work largely review, does it aim to develop scholarship in these subjects, or does it aim to give the student a knowledge of teaching methods and principles of organization of courses? No one of these principles operates to the exclusion of the others in any department. The first and second principles dominate in a single school, the first and third in 11 schools, and all three are kept in mind in 4 schools. One of the teachers in the last group responded as follows: "The primary aim is to develop a knowledge of teaching methods and principles of organization of courses, but considerable attention must be given to review of subject-matter, as well as to extension of it." The total numbers of times that each of the principles is recognized are, respectively, 16, 8, and 18. Manifestly, most of the teachers are assuming that scholarship in the teaching subjects has been sufficiently provided for and that the task to be accomplished is the development of the professional aspects of these subjects, which may, however, usually imply some measure of review.

CREDIT GRANTED TOWARD GRADUATION FOR THE TRAINING-
DEPARTMENT WORK

No school of this group denies credit toward graduation for any of the work so far touched upon in this study. The total amounts, in units,¹ of this work accepted toward graduation are as follows:

Number of Units Granted	Number of Schools
2.....	2
3.....	10
3½.....	1
4.....	3
4½.....	1
5.....	1
6.....	1
<hr/>	
Total number of schools.....	19

It may be understood from this that work in the teacher-training department, for purposes of high-school graduation, is placed on a par with the traditional high-school subjects.

OBSERVATION AND PRACTICE TEACHING

Observation of teaching is required in all the 19 departments, but the amounts vary so widely as to make it impossible to point to a standard practice, and are stated in such a way as not to make them readily comparable. It has already been noted above that 3 departments include the work in observation with that in methods as a single course. Five schools report—and this is in accord with state requirement²—30 lessons during the school year, 7 report the equivalent of one 20- to 40-minute period per week throughout the school year, and a single school each reports “one day in each month,” “two days,” “depends on class,” and “a very little.” In 11 of the 19 schools no credit is granted for the observation required. In the remaining schools the credit is allowed

¹ The unit was defined as follows for the teachers supplying the information for this study: “A Unit is here understood to be the equivalent of a subject running through a full school year with five single class periods per week for which the student is required to make preparation outside the class period. When no such preparation is required, the class period is usually doubled, as in laboratory or shop courses, or the credit cut to half the amount that would be granted were such outside preparation necessary.”

² Missouri.

for it as part of courses in methods, methods and management, methods and observation, observation and practice teaching, etc.

Practice teaching is a requirement in but 5 of the 19 departments. The teacher in one of these departments reports that "some time is provided," the remaining 4 reporting as shown by Table I. Thus, in 14 of the 19 schools no organized practice

TABLE I

Number of Weeks	Number of Periods per Week	Length of Period in Minutes
18.....	5	80
20.....	5	15, 20, and 30
20.....	5	40
36.....	5	60

teaching is provided, although 3 speak of permitting the students in the department to substitute when the regular grade teachers are off duty. Although "learning by doing" is long since a platitudinous educational principle, many of us are still failing to recognize it in educational practice, preferring to direct our students in reading and talking about an activity to requiring participation in it.

OTHER HIGH-SCHOOL WORK REQUIRED OF TRAINING- DEPARTMENT STUDENTS

Fifteen of the 19 schools in which the teacher-training departments supplying data for this study are maintained prescribe to a greater or less extent what the student's work outside the department is to be. The 4 remaining schools state that the student's work outside the department is not prescribed for him, i.e., we may conclude that the remaining work necessary for graduation is elective. The prescriptions of the former group are set forth in Table II. The more commonly prescribed subjects are seen to be English, mathematics, history, science, and agriculture. The modal amounts of requirement in these subjects are, respectively, 3, 2, 1, 1, and 1 units. American history is named as a requirement in 9 of the 15 instances in which history is prescribed. If to this number are added the 3 departments that report it as a required course especially organized and conducted for the teacher-training

TABLE II
PRESCRIBED WORK OUTSIDE THE TRAINING DEPARTMENT

ENGLISH		MATHEMATICS		SCIENCE		HISTORY		CIVICS	
Number of Units	Number of Schools	Number of Units	Number of Schools	Number of Units	Number of Schools	Number of Units	Number of Schools	Number of Units	Number of Schools
2½	1	1	1	1	9	½	1	½	2
3	8	2	7	1½	1	1	6	?	1
4	1	2½	1	2	2	2	3		
?	1	?	1	?	2	?	5	Total...	3
Total...	11	Total...	10	Total...	14	Total...	15		
FOREIGN LANGUAGE		"SPECIAL OR VOCATIONAL" SUBJECT		AGRICULTURE		BOOKKEEPING		PENMANSHIP	
Number of Units	Number of Schools	Number of Units	Number of Schools	Number of Units	Number of Schools	Number of Units	Number of Schools	Number of Units	Number of Schools
3	1	1	2	½	1	?	2	½	1
				1	5				
				?	2				
				Total...	8				

*The question mark indicates that the amount of credit was not stated.

department, as noted above, we find it an all but universal requirement. In 4 of the 14 instances of a prescription in science, physics is named. It is interesting to note that foreign language is prescribed in but one school.

The total amounts of prescribed work outside the department for those schools that supplied data in such a form as to make them usable for such a compilation, are as follows:

Number of Units	Number of Schools
0.....	4
3.....	1
5.....	1
6.....	1
7½.....	3
8.....	1
13.....	1
Total.....	12

These amounts vary widely but, with the exception only of the school prescribing 13 units, give the student, as may be seen by comparison with what has been reported above under the head of "Credit Granted toward Graduation for the Training-Department Work," the privilege of election of a part of his work. Taking the training-department work does not deprive the student of all freedom of election in his remaining high-school work.

KINDS OF SCHOOLS FOR WHICH TRAINING DEPARTMENTS AIM TO PREPARE TEACHERS

Eleven of the 19 departments aim to prepare teachers for rural schools exclusively. Seven others prepare for both rural and graded schools, although 4 of this number make it clear by some qualifying statement that preparation for the latter is not the primary function of the department: "for rural schools primarily," "for graded schools in exceptional cases only," "but largely for country schools," "best fifth-year students elected to local elementary schools." One of the 19 departments prepares only for "any grade in the grammar schools" of the city in which it is maintained. It can seldom be anything but an unsatisfactory professional situation that will permit graduates of the high-school teacher-training departments, without subsequent training elsewhere, to teach in the elementary schools of a city school system. Preparation for rural-school teaching is more nearly justifiable on account of the present dearth of teachers with any amount of professional training in these schools.